

- Austral Avian Record. (Vol. iii. No. 3. London, 1916.)  
 Avicultural Magazine. (Third Series, Vol. vii. Nos. 6-8. London, 1916.)  
 Bird Notes. (New Series, Vol. vii. Nos. 4-6. Ashbourne, 1916.)  
 British Birds. (Vol. ix. Nos. 11, 12; Vol. x. No. 1. London, 1916.)  
 California Fish and Game. (Vol. ii. No. 2. San Francisco, 1916.)  
 The Condor. (Vol. xviii. No. 2. Hollywood, Cal., 1916.)  
 The Emu. (Vol. xv. pt. 4. Melbourne, 1916.)  
 The Irish Naturalist. (Vol. xxv. Nos. 4, 5. Dublin, 1916.)  
 La Science Française. (Tomes i., ii. Paris, 1915.)  
 Messenger Ornithologique. (1916, No. 2. Moscow, 1916.)  
 The Scottish Naturalist. (Nos. 52-54. Edinburgh, 1916.)  
 South Australian Ornithologist. (Vol. ii. pt. 6. Adelaide, 1916.)
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## XXVII.—Letters, Extracts, and Notes.

### The Rev. William Henry Hawker.

SIR,—Among the original members of the British Ornithologists' Union was the Rev. William Henry Hawker, an accomplished naturalist. In an obituary notice published in 'The Ibis,' 1874 (p. 464)—the year of his death—it is stated that he was not a contributor to the pages of this Journal. Again, in an appreciation published in the Jubilee number of 'The Ibis,' 1909 (p. 101), we find the same statement. These notices are not correct; for he was, on the contrary, one of the very earliest contributors to the new publication.

In the opening volume of 'The Ibis' for 1859 (p. 330) may be read a communication in which Mr. Hawker describes the supposed nesting in Hayling Island of the "Ash-coloured" Shrike, *Lanius excubitor*.

In both the above mentioned notices Mr. Hawker's christian names are correctly given, but in the Subject-Index, 1859-1894 (p. 56), his initials are confused, for, as contributor to 'The Ibis,' his name is entered as "Hawker, Rev. E. W.," while it is given correctly in the notice of his death on the same page.

It is curious that three mis-statements should occur in connexion with the same individual, but my own excuse

for venturing to write is the circumstance that I feel a natural concern that every detail made public about Mr. Hawker should be accurate, since the place from which I write was his, and every day I have to thank him for a home made interesting and beautiful by his knowledge and his care.

I am, Sir,

Ashford Chace,  
Petersfield, Hants.  
15 May, 1916.

Your obedient servant,

AUBYN TREVOR BATTYE.

#### Directive-marks in Nestling Birds.

SIR,—In Mr. C. F. M. Swynnerton's interesting paper on the "Coloration of the Mouths and Eggs of Birds," *Ibis*, *antea*, p. 274, he says that the "directive-marking" explanation, undoubtedly applicable in certain cases, is "Mr. Pycraft's." Is this a fact?

The question as to who first published the explanation is not a very important one, since it is one which might occur to any reasoning being; but it is well to be accurate in even trifling matters.

On December 1898 I published a short article in 'The Avicultural Magazine,' 1st ser. vol. v. pp. 25-27, in which I expressed my conviction that the ornamentation of the mouth in the young of *Poëphila mirabilis* was merely a guide to the parents when feeding their nestlings, and I quoted Mr. St. Quintin and Mr. Meade-Waldo as agreeing with me in this view of its object.

I subsequently gave examples of the nestlings to the British Museum, and talked the matter over with Mr. Pycraft, who also approved of my view; but if, previous to that date, he had published any observations on the subject, he did not inform me of the fact.

Yours faithfully,

A. G. BUTLER.

"The Lilies,"  
124 Beckenham Road,  
Beckenham, Kent.  
14 April, 1916.

**Habits of Nestling Birds.**

SIR,—After reading Mr. Swynnerton's account of the coloration, etc. of nestling birds, I venture to record the following note on the behaviour of young birds at night. Two or three years ago my attention was drawn to a fact that was contrary to what I had previously supposed—namely, that in the case of young Robins which were more than half-fledged, the old bird did not roost on, nor even near, the nest at night. Moreover, when the nest was touched, the nestlings went through a curious spasmodic action. With their shoulders hunched and quills ruffled, they jerked themselves up and down until the nest shook, meanwhile thrusting their heads to and fro, and making a low snapping sound with their bills which was quite unlike any sound I have heard from them by day. This spasm of movement lasted, roughly speaking, for from ten to twenty seconds, and was most characteristic though rather difficult to describe. It seemed to be quite automatic, in response to the stimulus of touching the nest, and the birds' eyes were shut all the time. During that and the following summers I have visited various nests at night, and have always got this behaviour more or less marked in Robins, in which species I have never seen the old bird roosting at the nest. In Blackbirds and Thrushes I have never seen it—there the parent frequently roosts with the young. I saw it again very markedly in the case of a brood of young Nightingales—here the old bird was roosting on a twig beside the nest—and less distinctly in some Chaffinches, where the old bird was not seen.

Yours truly,

M. D. HAVILAND.

Old Hall,  
Newnham College,  
Cambridge.

12 May, 1916.

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SIR,—In connection with Mr. Swynnerton's remarks on "warning coloration" and the comparative "edibility" of certain species in the last number of 'The Ibis,' it might

be interesting to draw attention to a case where an inherent dislike for the flesh of a bird has been entirely overcome by artificial means. I refer to the case of a trained Peregrine Falcon which has been educated to kill and eat a Rook, the latter species being probably quite immune from attack in the wild state. That falconers have no little difficulty in overcoming this pronounced prejudice is very clearly proved by reading Mr. Harting's instructions on how to "enter" a Falcon to this distasteful quarry . . . . "Feed her for some time previously on very dark-coloured pigeons, or give her the leg of a black-plumaged fowl to "tire" on, and when she has eventually killed her first Rook (with a line on) a freshly killed Pigeon should be adroitly thrust up from under the Rook's outstretched wings, and cut open in such a way as to enable the Hawk to get a mouthful of the Pigeon instead of the Rook" (*cf.* "Hints on Hawks," p. 68).

With regard to the peculiar mouth ornamentations found in certain nestling birds, Mr. Swynnerton has brought together a fund of extremely interesting information. Although he does not say so in so many words, he seems to infer that these characters are constant in the species possessing them. When I wrote my 'Ibis' article in 1907 I was under the same impression, and it was not until 1913 that I realized that the tongue-spots, at any rate, were subject to a certain amount of variation. On July 29 of that year I found a nest of the Common Skylark (*Alauda arvensis arvensis*) containing three young birds. Upon the tongues of these nestlings the usually conspicuous basal spots were entirely wanting. Subsequently I have noticed that these basal marks occasionally vary, not only in size but also in shape, and this may sometimes be seen in members of the same brood.

Yours truly,

COLLINGWOOD INGRAM, Captain.

Westgate-on-Sea.

12 May, 1916.

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*B. O. U. Special General Meeting, held April 12, 1916.*—  
On the proposal of Mr. Ogilvie-Grant, seconded by Mr. Selater, Mr. H. J. Elwes was unanimously requested to take the Chair.

The Chairman read the notice convening the meeting and explained the circumstances under which it had been summoned.

Mr. R. W. Chase then moved:—

“That a vote of confidence in the former Committee be passed and that they be requested to allow themselves to be re-elected.”

This was seconded by Mr. A. H. Evans, and on being put to the meeting was carried unanimously.

Mr. Stuart Baker, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the members for their appreciation of the services of the Committee, and stated that they would be willing to again take up office.

At this point Mr. Elwes offered to relinquish the Chair, but at the general request of the meeting he continued to preside.

The following resolution was then moved by Col. H. W. Feilden and seconded by Mr. E. Bidwell:—

“That the name of H.M. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria be and hereby is removed from the list of Ordinary Members of the Union.”

On being put to the meeting this resolution was carried, there being only one dissentient.

Certain remarks having been made as to the inadequacy of the present Rules, the Chairman said that it appeared to be the general opinion that they needed careful revision, and he was therefore glad to announce that the Committee had decided to consider the question of revision of the Rules for submission to the next Annual General Meeting. In the meantime they would welcome any suggestions from members to that effect.

Dr. H. O. Forbes then proposed that the names of all enemy alien members be removed from the Lists of Members of the Union, but the Chairman ruled him out of order and explained that the same question had been considered at a Special General Meeting called for the purpose only three months previously.

Mr. G. A. Macmillan, Secretary of the Hellenic Society, stated that the Royal Society had been approached on the question of taking action against enemy alien members, and it was decided that should a meeting of members of Scientific Societies be summoned by the Royal Society to consider this question, the B. O. U. should be represented thereat.

The meeting then closed with a hearty vote of thanks to the Chair.

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*Recent accessions to the Natural History Museum.*—We hear that Mr. A. L. Butler has recently presented to the Museum the remainder of his magnificent collection of Soudanese birds in addition to those previously given. He has also included in his gift a valuable collection of birds from Ceylon and a series of beautifully prepared skins from Great Britain, Europe, and India as well as special collections of Paradise-Birds, Kingfishers, and Pittas. The Indian collections were made by the late Lt.-Col. E. A. Butler—Mr. A. L. Butler's father, who has recently died.

The Soudanese collection alone consists of 722 skins and includes the types and unique examples of *Cisticola butleri*, *C. wellsi*, and *Lagonosticta butleri* collected by Mr. Butler in the Bahr-el-Gazal.

Another very valuable accession recently received in the Bird-room is a selection of the collection of birds recently made for Mr. E. J. Brook by Mr. Walter Goodfellow in the high mountains of Ecuador. These specimens, 87 in number, have been chosen out of the whole collection of 1350 skins



brought home by Mr. Goodfellow and have been most generously presented to the Museum by Mr. Brook. They include the types and co-types of five new species and subspecies described recently by Mr. Chubb (Bull. B. O. C. xxxvi. 1916, pp. 46-47), viz., *Asio galapagoensis aequatorialis*, *Ciccaba albitarse goodfellowi*, *Pyriglena castanopterus*, *Grallaria nuchalis obsoleta*, and *Automolus brooki*, and numerous other rare forms most of which were wanting or previously very imperfectly represented in the collection.

We should also like to draw the attention of our readers and members to the series of exhibition cases in the Bird-Gallery of the Museum. For some years past these cases have been gradually rearranged and renovated. New specimens freshly mounted have been substituted for the old ones, and the whole collection rendered more instructive by the provision of maps and additional explanatory labels.

Cases 67-72 have recently been completed in this manner and there remain only twelve more to be taken in hand. It is most important that these should be completed, and it is to be hoped that the Trustees of the Museum will see their way to provide the necessary funds to complete the work.

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*Notice to Members of the British Ornithologists' Union.*—The attention of members is drawn to the proposed revision of the Rules of the Union mentioned above (p. 524) and the Secretary will be glad to receive suggestions as soon as possible.

Members are also reminded that a form of proposal for candidates for Ordinary Membership of the Union is inserted in every copy of 'The Ibis' each quarter, and that ladies are now eligible for membership. As the Union is in need of further support, it is hoped that every member will do his best to increase the membership.

A number of members have not yet instructed their Bankers to pay the increased subscription of 25s. in place of

the former sum of 20s. The Secretary will be much obliged if these members will give the necessary instructions as quickly as possible. New "Banker's Order" forms for the purpose can be had on application.

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*Oological Dinner.*—It is proposed to hold the second annual Oological dinner on Wednesday, September 13th, 1916, at 7 o'clock, at Pagani's Restaurant, Great Portland Street.

This dinner will be open to all naturalists specially interested in Oology, and those who wish to attend, or to exhibit specimens of rare or interesting eggs, are asked to send their names to Mr. Clifford Borrer, 20 Pelham Crescent, South Kensington, at least a fortnight before the dinner.

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*Honour for a M. B. O. U.*—The many friends of Mr. Eagle Clarke will be pleased to hear that he is to receive the well-merited reward of the honorary degree of LL.D. from the University of St. Andrews on July the 6th.

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*Mr. Beebe on Archæopteryx and the ancestry of birds.*—An ingenious attempt to demonstrate "a Tetrapteryx Stage in the Ancestry of Birds" has just been made by Mr. C. W. Beebe in 'Zoologica,' vol. ii., No. 2. The author insists that the precocious and conspicuous development of the femoral tract in the pterylosis of nestling birds points conclusively to a stage in the development of the pro-aves when this tract was formed of large quill-like feathers, which, with similar feathers along the post-axial border of the fore-limb, afforded a parachute-like mechanism, comparable to the flying-membranes of flying-squirrels, and preceded true flight. The hypothetical restoration of this four-winged stage, which forms the frontispiece to his essay, is curiously like that which appeared in 'Knowledge' in 1906, save that this lacked the "femoral wings." Mr. Beebe seeks to justify his hypothesis by an appeal to photographs of the



remains of the *Archæopteryx* in the Berlin Museum. These, however, certainly seem to have been misinterpreted, for the feathers to which he evidently refers are those which invested the tibia. No one who has studied the original remains of this fossil would for a moment agree that these afford evidence for this "femoral tract."

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*A Bibliography of British Ornithology.*—Messrs. Macmillan & Co. announce the forthcoming publication of a work on this subject by Messrs. W. H. Mullens & H. Kirke Swan. It will be issued in six parts, each at 6s. net, and will contain biographical accounts of the principal writers on British Birds and bibliographies of their published works from the earliest times to the end of 1912.